

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration, reexamination, and allowance of the present patent application are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indication, at page 7 of the Office Action, that the subject matters of Claims 9-12, 17, 20, and 21 are free of the prior art. By way of the foregoing amendments, Claims 9, 10, 11, and 17 have been placed in independent form, including the subject matters of Claim 1. Claims 13, 15, and 19 have been cancelled, and the remaining claims depend directly or indirectly from one of Claims 9-11 and 17.

Objection to the Drawings

At page 2 of the Office Action, the drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a) because the drawings allegedly did not adequately illustrate subject matter recited in Claim 17. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this objection.

Applicant submits herewith a new sheet of drawings, including a new Figure 3 which schematically illustrates the bayonet catch described at page 12 and claimed in Claim 17. Corresponding amendments have been made to the specification to list the reference numerals used in Fig. 3, and to add a Brief Description thereof. No new matter has been entered.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the drawings fully comply with 37 C.F.R. § 1.83, and therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection thereto.

Objection to the Abstract

At page 3 of the Office Action, the Abstract was objected to because it allegedly was too long and included a reference to a drawing figure. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this objection.

By way of the foregoing amendment, the Abstract has been shortened and reference to

Fig. 2 has been removed.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the Abstract is not objectionable, and therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection thereto.

Objection to the Disclosure

At pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action, the disclosure as a whole was objected to because it made reference to the claims. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this objection.

By way of the foregoing amendments, reference to the claims has been deleted.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the disclosure as a whole is not objectionable, and therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection thereto.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action, beginning at page 4, Claims 1, 3-8, 13, and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, as reciting subject matters that allegedly are anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,377,957, issued to Bilton, and Claims 1, 6-8, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, as reciting subject matters that allegedly are anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,136,516, issued to Corsmeier. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of these rejections.

In an effort to expedite prosecution of this application, and not by acquiescing to the foregoing rejections, Applicant has placed allowable Claims 9-11 and 17 in independent form, deleted Claims 1, 13, and 15, and made the remaining claims to depend from an allowable independent claim. Accordingly, the rejections under section 102 are moot.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the subject matters of Claims 3-8 and 18 are not anticipated by either *Bilton* or *Corsmeier*, are therefore not unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102, and therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection thereof under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In the Office Action, beginning at page 5, Claims 2-5, 13, 15, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as reciting subject matters that allegedly are obvious, and therefore allegedly unpatentable, over *Corsmeier* in view of the disclosure of U.S. Patent No. 6,454,156, issued to Taras. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this rejection.

As discussed above, Claims 2-5 each depend from an allowable claim, and Claims 13, 15, and 19 have been cancelled. Accordingly, the rejections under section 103(a) are moot.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the subject matters of Claims 2-5, each taken as a whole, would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention, are therefore not unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), and therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection thereof under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

New Claims

New Claims 22-39 have been added. Claims 22-39 include three sets of claims, each based directly on allowable Claims 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 18, each set depending from one of Claims 10, 11, and 17. Accordingly, Claims 22-39 are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claims 10, 11, and 17.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that the present patent application is in condition for allowance. An early indication of the allowability of this patent application is therefore respectfully solicited.

If Mr. Wiehe believes that a telephone conference with the undersigned would expedite passage of this patent application to issue, he is invited to call on the number below.

It is not believed that extensions of time are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in accompanying documents. If, however, additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge fees necessitated by this paper, and to credit all refunds and overpayments, to our Deposit Account 50-2821.

Respectfully submitted,

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¹ 37 C.F.R. § 1.4(d)3)